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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /062 W
----------230946Z 093500 /20
O P 230810Z APR 77 ZFF-3
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE NIACT IMMEDIATE 1111
INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DACCA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
CINCPAC HONOLU HI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 4003

CINCPAC FOR POLAD
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, PINT
SUBJ: WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE IN PAKISTAN

1. APRIL 22ND WITNESSED THE MOST WIDESPREAD, PERVASIVE AND INTESNE VIOLENCE YET TO OCCUR IN THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE OPPOSITION FOLLOWING THE MARCH 7 ELECTIONS. REPORTS FROM NUMEROUS CITIES AND TOWNS INDICATE THAT ALTERCATIONS BETWEEN THE PPP AND PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE SUPPORTERS OCCURRED DURING THE DAY WITH POLICE, FSF, AND IN SOME PLACES, THE ARMY ATTEMPTING TO ENFORCE SECURITY. MARTIAL LAW REMAINS IN EFFECT IN KARACHI, LAHORE, AND HYDERABAD.

2. THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 22, THE PRIME MINISTER MET WITH HIS PPP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING IN CONFIDENTIAL

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ISLAMABAD. DESPITE PNA EFFORTS TO DISRUPT TRAFFIC INTO THE CAPITAL, 159 MNA'S (NEARLY THE ENTIRE PPP CONTINGENT) AND 31 SENATORS ATTEDNED THE MEETING. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS AND WESTERN JOURNALISTS WHO SPOKE WITH SOME MNA'S, THE PM EXPLAINED WHY HE HAD TAKEN THE STEPS HE HAS, EXHORTED THE MNA'S AND SENATORS TO EXPLAIN TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS HOW BHUTTO IS TRYING TO "HEAL THE NATION", AND RECEIVED PLEDGES

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OF SUPPORT FROM HIS PARLIAMENTARY PARTY. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS
AFTER THE MEETING, THE INFORMATION MINISTER SAID THERE WAS NO
QUESTION OF THE PM'S RESIGNING.
BHUTTO HAD ALREADY MADE A REASONABLE OFFER OF A DIALOGUE
TO THE OPPOSITION AND THERE WERE NO IMMEDIATE PLANS TO REVISE THIE
OFFER. THE ASSEMBLY AND SENATE ARE SCHEDULED TO OPEN APRIL 26TH.

3. THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE PNA MET IN LAHORE ON THE 22ND AS
WELL. ACCORDING TO NAWA-I-WAQT, ACTING PARTY LEADER NAWABZADA
NASRULLAH KHAN CHAIRED THE SESSION, WHICH PASSED A RESOLUTION
IN WHICH THE PNA STATED THAT IF ITS DEMANDS ARE ACCEPTED BY THE PPP,
ALL PROMBLEMS WILL BE SOLVED. THE PNA ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THE
PEACEFUL STRUGGLE WILL CONTINUE. ACCORDING TO ABE
CORRESPONDENT IN LAHORE, THE NAWABZADA TOLD HIM THAT THE PNA
WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE CURFEW OR MARTIAL LAW FOR THE NEXT DAY
OR SO IN LAHORE. HE ADDED THAT IMPOSING MARTIAL LAW WAS A SIGN
OF GOVERNMENT WEAKNESS, AND THE PNA IS SO TELLING ITS SUPPORTERS.

4. PNA SUPPORTERS STAGED A GENERAL STRIKE ON APRIL 22. OUTSIDE
THE CURFEW/MARTIAL LAW AREAS THE GENERAL STRIKE WAS LARGELY
SUCCESSFUL IN HALTING NORMAL COMMERCIAL LIFE. THE ATTEMPT TO
STOP WHEELS FROM TURNING LED TO ATTACKS IN A NUMBER OF CITIES ON
RAILWAY TRAINS AND STATION HOUSES. PRIVATE TRANSPORT VEHICLES WERE
REPORTEDLY ABSENT FROM MOST CITY STREETS. HOWEVER, GOVERNMENT-RUN
BUS SERVICES ATTEMPTED WITH MIXED SUCCESS TO REMAIN IN OPERATION.
IN GENERAL THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF PUNJAB AND NORTH WEST FRONTIER
PROVINCE--WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND UTILITIES-
STOPPED FOR THE DAY. (CONGENS KARACHI AND LAHORE ARE REPORTING
SEPARTELY ON SITUATION IN SIND AND LAHORE CITY RESPECTIVELY.)
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5. BOTH THE PPP PNA DEMONSTRATED THEIR DETERMINATION IN THE
STREETS AS WELL YESTERDAY. IN QUETTA, SEVERAL CITIES AND TOWNS IN
THE NWFP, AND MOST OF THE PUNJAB'S CITIES AND TOWNS BOTH PARTIES SENT
THEIR FOLLOWERS OUT IN PROCESSIONS. PPP GROUPS VOICE THEIR SUPPORT
FOR PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO AND CONDEMNED OPPOSITION VIOLENCE AND
DISRUPTION. ONE SLOGAN RAISED BY A PPP PROCESSION IN RAWALPINDI
REJECTED THE OPPOSITION BRAND OF ISLAM AND HINTED AT U.S. SUPPORT
FOR THE OPPOSITION, AS PPP MARCHERS SHOUTED "DOLLAR KA ISLAM
NAHIN CHALEGA" (DOLLAR ISLAM WILL NOT ENDURE).

6. IN LYALLPUR THE VIOLENCE OF THE PPP/PNA CONFRONTATION AND
TWO DEATHS LED TO THE IMPOSITION OF A CURFEW BEGINNING AT 1400
HOURS. DEATHS WERE ALSO REPORTED IN PESHAWAR, RAWALPINDI, AND
OTHER CITIES. REUTERS CORRESPONDENT TELLS US HE HAS RECEIVED
REPORTS OF ABOUT 25 DEATHS NATIONWIDE. MORE COMMONPLACE WERE
ATTACKS ON THE FEW BUSINESSES THAT REMAINED OPEN,
VIOLENCE DIRECTED TOWARD PPP OFFICES AND THE HOMES AND PROPERTY
OF PPP OFFICIALS, AND PROCESSIONS

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THAT DEGENERATED INTO SMALLER GROUPS THAT ATTACKED PUBLIC
PROPERTY AND POLICE WITH STONES.
ONE EXCEPTION TO THE GENERAL PATTERN OCCURRED IN NAWABSHAH, WHERE
POLICE DISPERSED A PROCESSION OF PPP SUPPORTERS; OTHERWISE LAW
ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS CONCENTRATED MAINLY ON PNA PROCESSIONS.
DURING A RALLY PNA WORKERS HELD THRUSDAY IN RAWALPINDI, THERE
WESTERN JOURNALISTS ARRIVED AND WERE GREETED WITH SHOUTS OF
"BBC ZINDABAD" (LONG LIVE BBC). THE PAKISTAN TIMES , A PRESS
TRUST PAPER, REPORTED THIS INCIDENT WITH THE COMMENT THAT THE
BBC HAS BEEN TRYING "TO STOKE THE FIRES OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY
BY ITS PROVOCATIVE REPORTING ON THE EVENTS IN PAKISTAN."

7. AMCONSUL PESHAWAR REPORTS LATE MORNING APRIL 23 THAT MANY
PEOPLE ARE MILLING AROUND IN PESHAWAR CANTONMENT AREA. THEY EXPECT
TO BE MET THERE LATER TODAY BY A PROCESSION THAT WILL COME FROM
THE OLD CITY. A MEETING OF THE NWFP CABINET THURSDAY RESOLVED
TO PRESERVE PEACE AND TO CURB LAWLESSNESS "AT ALL COSTS".
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8. IN MOVE DIRECTED AT THE OFTEN OBSTREPEROUS AND ANTI-GOVERNMENT
BAR COUNCILS, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THURSDAY ORDERED ITS AGENCIES
TO DISMISS ALL LAWYERS FROM ITS SERVICES (INCLUDING ATTORNEYS FOR
GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED BANKS AND BUSINESSES) WHO HAVE BEEN ENGAGED
IN ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. THE GOVERNMENT ALSO DIRECTED THE
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE SIMILAR STEPS.
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Message Attributes

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